

5.2 Ancient China in Mud and Wood :: 7.2 Tang China as Gridded Capitals and Pagodas

1) **Ancient China**

- Architecture and language as far back as 7000 BCE but little remains due to lack of permanent materials.
- **Zhou dynasty** dominates off and on until 256 BCE and establishes capital city at **Chang'an** (City of Everlasting Peace) (chang-anne)
  - Later moved capital city to Luoyang

2) **Major ideas:**

- **Wangcheng Diagram** - (wong-cheng) diagram for design of Chinese cities which essentially is a nine-square grid. Diagram shows three gates on each side, each leading to broad avenues, which, when cross, create a nine-square with the imperial palace as the center.
- **Mandate of Heaven** - A mandate from about 1000 BCE that bestowed upon the emperor semi-divine status, a **son of heaven**, from which his authority was based. The mandate could be bestowed upon or taken from any person.
- **feng shui** - (fong-schway) Ancient Chinese practice of geomancy which establishes a spiritual or psychological resonance between humans and human activity and a fundamental orientation to one's physical environment or world, a.k.a. cosmos. When one is *favorably oriented* in one's physical space, the *energy is good*. The energy is called **qi** - (chee).
- **qi** - (chee) The good or **positive energy** of a person when properly or favorably oriented in physical space. It can be something as simple as having one's back to the wall facing the center of a room, rather than facing a wall with one's back to the center of the room.
- **Cardinal points important**
  - *south* - palaces and city gates face south. The direction of the Red Phoenix
  - *east* - region of the Blue Dragon, growth, spring, upright tree
  - *west* - region of the White Tiger, autumn, harvest
  - *north* - region off cold winds, invaders, destruction

3) **Construction :: tripartite system**

- Foundational platform
  - stone or masonry, often stepping up hierarchically
- **timber frame**,
  - **jian proportions** - an additive system in room-sized modules
  - *jian proportions* basically 10' x 20' modular bays
  - **dougong brackets** - structural connection system of main beams to smaller beams and cross beams with multiple connections, leading to the support of the roof. *Dougong* brackets diffused the structural loads and were manipulated to curve upward in the traditional Chinese fashion. They resisted earthquake forces by flexing and distributing the loads and forces of the heavy roof transmitted down through the columns which were not founded into the ground.
- **decorative roof** - heavy tiled roof, corners and hip-rafters curving-upward, finial and corner carvings on roof.

4) **Qin dynasty** (chee-eeen) 221-206 BCE first dynasty of imperial China

- **Shi Huangdi** was emperor who consolidated **Qin dynasty** (221-210 BCE)
  - reputation as ruthless military leader and administrator
  - national written language
  - national currency
  - national straight highways
  - national program to build **Great Wall of China**
- **Great Wall of China**
  - world's first great public works project
  - Great Wall continued to be worked on in later empires
  - defense on the northern and western borders
  - toll, tribute, protection road along the **Silk Route**
- **Shi Huangdi's Army**
  - emperor's burial mound - **tumulus** - discovered near Chang'an in 1974
  - thirty-three percent (33%) bigger at base than *pyramid of Khufu* but only half as high
  - contained **8000 terra cotta soldiers, archers, charioteers** - very detailed and original

5) **Sui dynasty** 581-605 CE

- **Sui dynasty** (soo-way) (581-605 CE) led to the **Tang dynasty**
  - Sui built the largest canal system in world
  - Sui rebuilt Chang'an as capital city (calling it Daxing)
  - **Chang'an** (Daxing) **was the eastern terminus of the Silk Route**
  - modern name of Chang'an is **Xi'an** (*zhée-en*)
  - **Bridge of Zhaozhou** (616 CE) built by craftsman Li Chun (possibly assisted by architect Kai) very modern arching bridge spanning 121 feet.
  - Sui dynasty architect Kai laid out Chang'an based on the **wangcheng diagram**
  - very wide streets - 500 feet wide - led to segregation of city
  - **108 fangs** or wards interspersed with palaces, markets, squares (see map)

6) **Tang dynasty** 618-907 CE

- **Buddhist pagodas and monasteries**
  - Buddhism comes to China *100 BCE from along Silk Route*
  - height of pagoda related to cosmology of Buddhism
  - visitors achieved enlightenment as well as enjoyed the vast views of the city
- **Great Wild Goose Pagoda** (652 CE)
  - **lounge type** (stepped level pagoda)
  - built for Ci'en monastery
  - 197 feet tall
- **Small Wild Goose Pagoda** (707 CE)
  - **miyuan type** (hollow core pagoda)
  - built for Yi Jing
  - 148 feet tall
- **Monasteries destroyed about 845 CE**
  - monasteries grew too powerful economically
  - threatened imperial power
  - 46,000 destroyed
- **Empress Wu** (623-705)
  - wife of 3rd Tang emperor who assumed imperial power when husband Gaozong died in power
  - *evil person with bad reputation* in history for various atrocities
  - came to be wife of Gaozong through system of concubinage and rose to be imperial consort (Queen Consort or Queen Concubine)
  - *gained legitimacy through architectural patronage*
  - **Empress Wu's Necropolis** most important work (680 CE)
  - three natural hills, grand wide boulevard, hundreds of colossal sculptures

7) **Korea**

- Silla dynasty (668-935 CE) almost contemporary with Tang
  - Bulguk-sa Temple, very similar to Tang dynasty construction
  - Silla tombs in the form of tumuli, very similar to burial tumuli of Ireland